

Official Action to and including November 11, 2000. In view of the above amendments and within remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

The present application includes claims 1-33, of which claims 1 and 32 have been presented in independent form. The Examiner has rejected all claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent of Sasaki, et al., No. 8,242,526 in view of Nimiya, et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,933,512. In view of the above amendments and within remarks, the Examiner's rejection is considered traversed and should therefore be withdrawn.

Turning to independent claim 1, this claim has been amended to include the limitation as follows:

said gasket being discontinuous about the outer periphery surface of said end plate whereby portions of said plurality of peaks and valleys are exposed, whereby said exposed portions of said plurality of peaks and valleys are abutted directly against the inner surface of the sleeve and the gasket covered portions of said plurality of peaks and valleys are abutted against said inner sleeve with said gasket therebetween.

Pursuant to the invention, as now claimed, the gasket does not extend completely around the outer periphery of the surface of the end plate. Rather, the gasket is interrupted by discontinuous portions so as to expose the underlying plurality of peaks and valleys. As a result of this arrangement, the exposed portions of the plurality of peaks and valleys abut directly against the inner surface of the sleeve, while the gasket covered portions of the plurality of peaks and valleys abut against the inner sleeve with the gasket therebetween.

This feature of Applicants' claimed invention is neither disclosed nor rendered obvious by the prior art cited by the Examiner. Support for the aforementioned limitation may be found in Applicants' specification on page 14, line 36 through page 15, line 16.

It is acknowledged by the Examiner that Sasaki, et al. does not disclose the use of a gasket including an adhesive interposed between the outer periphery of the end plate and an inner surface of the sleeve so as to cover an outer end of the slit, and the gasket being arranged on the outer periphery surface of the end plate by adhesion while being conformed to the outer periphery of the end plate and the plurality of peak and valley shaped grooves of the sealing member. To this end, the Examiner refers to Nimiya, et al. as disclosing a gasket 60 which purportedly meets the aforementioned limitations. However, the gasket disclosed in Nimiya, et al. extends 360° about the end plate 40. There is no teaching or suggestion in Nimiya, et al. of the gasket being arranged other than completely about the end plate. In fact, based on the construction of the end plate in Nimiya, et al., it is a requirement that the gasket extend 360° thereabout. Otherwise, a proper seal could not be achieved pursuant to the disclosure in Nimiya, et al. Thus, the combination suggested by the Examiner, if at all, would suggest that the gasket be provided 360° about the end plate disclosed in Sasaki, et al. There is no other suggestion, i.e., a gasket having discontinuous portions. Accordingly, the cited prior art fails to teach or suggest the aforementioned claimed feature of Applicants' invention, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Turning to independent claim 32, this claim is distinguished, for example, over the prior art by disclosing a cable clamp including a clamp body having curved holding member

17 as shown in Fig. 14. More specifically, the cable guide recess and the curved holding member are detachably provided with holding spacers 33 in a manner to be opposite to each other as also shown in Fig. 14. Further, there is no disclosure in the prior art cited by the Examiner of the holding spacers being each constructed of an arcuate element with at least one peak and valley shaped groove on an arcuate inner peripheral surface thereof as set forth in dependent claim 33. These features of Applicants' claimed holding spacers are set forth in dependent claim 4, the peak and valley shaped grooves being further set forth in dependent claims 11, 12 and 21.

The Examiner states that Sasaki, et al. discloses end plates having cable guide holes 20. However, as clearly seen in the drawings, there is no disclosure of Applicants' claimed separate holding spacers nor of any such holding spacers having at least one peak and valley shaped groove. Further, there is no argument advanced in the Official Action that the prior art of record disclose these claimed features. This is not surprising as the prior art fails to disclose Applicants' claimed holding spacers. Accordingly, the Examiner's rejection is considered traversed and should therefore be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 7, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose a holder 31 provided on the end plate 3 and formed with a recess 30, and a projection 40 of the cable clamp 4 adapted to fit in the recess 30, as claimed in this claim, see Applicants' Figs. 8 and 12.

Regarding claims 9 and 10, each of the screws 19 of Sasaki, et al. is threaded into the clamp body 16, and thus Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Fig. 14, a pivotal element 19, into which the screw 19 is inserted and which is pivotally supported on the clamp body 16, as claimed in claims 9 and 10.

Regarding claim 22, Sasaki, et al. discloses a pair of hinge mechanisms each constituted by a hinge hole 28 and a hinge rod 27 and a plurality of buckles 30. However, the hinge mechanisms 27, 28 and buckles 30 are different from the hinges 60 and fasteners 70, as claimed in claim 22.

Regarding claims 23-25, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Figs. 35A and 36, a recess 76 between the outer edges of the abutting joint surfaces of the sleeve members 1, 2 and a retaining member 77 provided on the ring of the fastener 70 or hinge 60, as claimed in these claims.

Regarding claim 26, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Fig. 36, a stopper 64 for holding the first ring 61 of the hinge 60 at a predetermined angle, as claimed in this claim.

Regarding claim 27, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose that the opposite ends of the recess 6 for the gasket 7 are each reduced in width, as claimed in this claim.

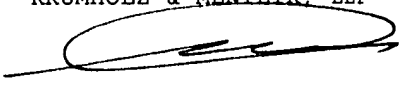
Regarding claim 28, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Fig. 4, barriers 65 provided on both side edges of the sleeve members 1, 2, as claimed in this claim.

As all claims now pending in this application possess the requisite novelty and unobviousness over the prior art of record, notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If, for any reason, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken at this time, he is invited to telephone the undersigned at (908) 654-5000, so as to overcome any additional issues that may need resolution. If there are any fees to be

Application No.: 08/799,400

incurred in connection with this response, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095.

LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,  
KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK, LLP



STEPHEN B. GOLDMAN  
Reg. No. 28,512

600 South Avenue West  
Westfield, New Jersey 07090-1497  
Telephone: (908) 654-5000  
Facsimile: (908) 654-7866  
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